



## Riverview Garden Club Helpful Hints

### November 2020

The holidays are weeks away and it will be difficult to decide how to handle them this year. Take the stress out of life by working outside on the nicer days and finish up your outdoor chores. Your time outdoors should be pleasant for you, stress free, with time to plan for the holidays keeping in mind respect for all due to Covid-19.

As autumn turns to winter, your main jobs in the garden are mostly about protecting plants and structures from the wilder weather to come.

**Maintenance-** Don't forget to service your lawn mower after the last mowing. Drain the last of the gasoline by letting the mower run dry or add a fuel stabilizer by following manufacturer recommendations. Change the spark plug and oil, and sharpen the blade to be ready for next spring. Drain and store hoses carefully to avoid damage from freezing. Clean and oil all your garden equipment and small hand tools before storing them. To protect built-in sprinkler systems, drain the system and insulate the valve mechanisms. Your furniture will need protecting at this time of year. Cover any wooden pieces, or move them into a storage area—garage, basement, or shed.

**Evergreens-** Protect tender evergreens of boxwoods, holly, rhododendron, and conifers such as arborvitae, cedar, cypress, juniper, and pine from drying winds by using an anti-dessicant. Follow manufacturer's direction for timing. Tie limbs of upright evergreens to prevent breakage by snow or ice. If natural precipitation is sparse and ground is not frozen, water evergreen trees and shrubs to ensure they are well hydrated heading into winter.

**Perennials—** Trim chrysanthemums to 4 to 6 inches after they finish blooming. Leave ornamental grasses up in winter to provide texture in the landscape. Cut back the yellowing foliage of herbaceous perennials, and lift and divide overcrowded clumps to maintain their vigour.

**Bulbs, Corms, and Tubers--** Continue to lift dahlia tubers, begonias, and gladiolus corms to store dry over the winter months. Remove the dead foliage before storing. Prepare a bed for planting garlic by improving heavy soils with organic matter before planting. There is still time to plant spring

**blooming bulbs such as daffodil, tulip, and hyacinth as long as the ground is not frozen.**

**Leaf Mulch**—Collect leaves for making leaf mold as a soil conditioner. Oak, alder, and hornbeam will rot down in a year, but beach, sycamore, horse chestnut, and sweet chestnut will take a couple of years to compost. Or, shred fallen leaves to help them rot down even more quickly. A quick way to do this is to gather leaves on to the lawn and mow them with a rotary mower that has a collection box.

**General**—Insulate your outdoor containers using burlap or bubble wrap held in place with garden twine. Raise pots off the ground by using bricks to prevent waterlogging. Encourage hungry birds into your garden by investing in bird feeders and bird baths with heaters. Cut a few stems of holly with berries for making Christmas garlands. It's early, but now's the time to do it before the birds eat all the berries. Stand them in a bucket of water in a sheltered spot where birds can't take the berries.

**Enjoy your holiday this Thanksgiving being mindful of others.**



**--Sandy**